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Message Text

SECRET

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47
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 027023
R 081343Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7062
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 06832

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECY ATHERTON FROM AMBS ANDERSON AND PARKER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO, AG
SUBJECT: MADRID CONSULTATIONS

1. WE HAVE HAD VERY USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST, AND HAVE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS AND AGREED CONCLUSIONS ON SAHARA PROBLEM WHICH YOU AND OTHERS SUCH AS HAL SAUNDERS, SAM LEWIS, AND PHIL HABIB MAY FIND OF INTEREST.

2. NATURE OF CONFLICT--(A) BOTH SIDES SEEM PREPARED TO MAINTAIN AND TOLERATE PRESENT LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN SAHARA. IT IS HURTING MOROCCANS MORE THAN ALGERIANS, IN TERMS OF LIVES AND MONEY, BUT APPEARS TO BE WELL WITHIN CURRENT MOROCCAN CAPABILITIES. FOR THEIR PART, ALGERIANS ARE FIGHTING WAR BY PROXY, AND CAN, FROM STRICTLY MILITARY AND FINANCIAL STANDPOINT, PROBABLY KEEP IT UP INDEFINITELY.
(B) WE JUDGE NEITHER SIDE IS CURRENTLY INTERESTED IN ESCALATING TO OPEN MILITARY CONFLICT BY CONVENTIONAL FORCES. FRUSTRATION OF MOROCCAN MILITARY AT CONTINUING CASUALTIES FROM POLISARIO OPERATIONS MAY EVENTUALLY LEAD TO REPRISAL RAIDS, PARTICULARLY IN EVENT SCOPE OF
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SUCH OPERATIONS WIDENED. IN ANY CASE, NEITHER

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SIDE IS READY TO TAKE ON THE OTHER IN FULL SCALE WAR.
MOROCCANS MAY OPT FOR MORE MOBLIE TACTICS AND COULD
EVENTUALLY DECIDE TO SENT INFILTRATORS INTO ALGERIAN
TERRITORY, BUT FIGHTING WILL REMAIN ESSENTIALLY
GUERRILLA WARFARE. SUCH A MOVE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY
NOT OCCUR UNTIL AFTER UNGA DEBATE AT EARLIEST
AND WOULD DEPEND ON MOROCCAN PERCEPTION OF DANGER THAT IS
MIGHT REVERSE CURRENTLY SUCCESSFUL TREND TOWARDS
DENYING POLISARIO PROGRESS ON POLITICAL FRONT.

3. POSSIBILITIES OF SETTLEMENT--(A) WE SEE NO CURRENT
SETTLEMENT. ESSSENTIAL PRE-

CONDITION OF WILLINGNESS BY EITHER SIDE TO COMPROMISE
IS NOT PRESENT. NOR DOES EITHER SIDE HAVE POWER TO
IMPOSE SETTLEMENT ON OTHER.
(B) IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MOROCCANS WILL EVENTUALLY
BE ABLE TO WEAR DOWN POLISARIO, BUT THIS SEEMS
UNLIKELY IN SHORT RUN AND WE EXPECT POLITICAL-
MILITARY STALEMATE TO CONTINUE UNLESS THERE IS SOME
NEW DEVELOPMENT. LACK OF INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE
OF POLISARIO OVER LONG TERM MIGHT EVENTUALLY FORCE
CHANGE IN BOUMEDIENE'S CURRENT POLICY, WHICH DOES NOT
ENJOY GREAT POPULAR SUPPORT IN ALGERIA AND WHICH HAS
CAUSED A REGRETTABLE DIVERSION OF RESOURCES FROM
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. SUCH A CHANGE, HOW-
EVER, WOULD BE UNLIKELY IN THE IMMEDIATE OR MID
TERM.
(C) WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO JUDGE CHANGES
OF SUCCESS, MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO STOP FIGHTING WOULD
BE TO ELIMINATE POLISARIO MANPOWER BASE. GIVEN
MOBILITY AND DISPERSION OF POLISARIO FORCES, WE DO
NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE PRACTICABLE BY MILITARY
MEANS. A MAJOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST POLISARIO'S
PRINCIPAL BASES ON ALGERIAN SIDE OF BORDER WOULD
PROBABLY HAVE FEW RESULTS OTHER THAN PROVOKING A
MAJOR ALGERIAN RESPONSE, WHICH THE GOM DOES NOT
CONSIDER IT COULD SUCCESSFULLY COUNTER.
(D) MORE PROMISING TACTIC WOULD BE FOR MOROCCANS
TO PERSUADE SAHRAOUI REFUGEES, WHO ARE POLISARIO'S
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POPULATION BASE, TO RETURN TO TERRITORY NOW CONTROLLED
BY MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS. THIS WOULD REQUIRE
MAJOR PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT, AND
SIZEABLE EXPENDITURES OF FUNDS AND ENERGY TO PROVIDE
SAHARANS WITH PROSPECT OF LIVES SO MUCH MORE
ATTRACTIVE THAN LIFE IN CAMPS SO AS TO MAKE THEM RETURN TO
THEIR FORMER HOMES IN DEFIANCE OF POLISARIO LEADERS.
IF SUCCESSFUL, SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD CHANGE SITUATION

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RADICALLY. POLISARIO GUERRILLAS ARE MOSTLY FROM REFUGEE FAMILIES, AND IF FAMILIES LEFT AREA UNDER ALGERIAN CONTROL IT WOULD MEAN MEN WOULD ACCOMPANY OR FOLLOW. AFTER DISMAL INITIAL POLICY OF INTIMIDATION WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE IN LARGE MEASURE (BUT NOT ENTIRELY) FOR MOVEMENT OF MANY SAHARANS ACROSS BORDER, MOROCCANS APPARENTLY BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE VALUE OF GENTLER TACTICS, AS EVIDENCED BY THEIR EFFORTS AT GENEVA WITH UNHCR AND NEW RADIO PROGRAM BEAMED AT REFUGEES, URGING THEM TO COME HOME. THIS IS HOPEFUL SIGN AND WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE MOROCCANS TO MAKE SERIOUS TRY TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS OF SAHRAOUIS. WERE LATTER TO RETURN HOME, ALGERIANS WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO EXPLOIT THEM SO EASILY AND ISSUE WOULD EVENTUALLY DIE ON THE VINE. INDEED, A FORM OF SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD HAVE BEEN EXERCISED.

4. UNGA TACTICS--(A) RESULTS OF 1975 VOTE: (I) POLITICAL-BILATERAL. (A) ALGERIA. OUR VOTE FOR PRO-MOROCCAN RESOLUTION AT LAST UNGA HAD CHILLING EFFECT ON OUR POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA, BUT THOSE RELATIONS NOT VERY WARM TO BEGIN WITH. PRINCIPAL CASUALTY WAS SECRETARY'S DIALOGUE WITH BOUMEDIENE, BUT SINCE THAT WAS CENTERED ON MID-EAST SETTLEMENT EFFORTS WHICH HELD UP BY LEBANESE CRISIS IN ANY EVENT, NET DAMAGE WELL WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS. (B) MOROCCO. THIS VOTE HAS BROUGHT A MARKED, POSITIVE CHANGE IN RELATIONS, HIGHLIGHTED BY GREATLY INCREASED INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION, COOPERATION ON TERRORISM, NPW VISITS, DECISIONS TO MOVE ON DOUBLE TAXATION TREATY, ACTIVE POLICY OF ENCOURAGING PRIVATE US INVESTMENTS, AND SUPPORT FOR

US POSITIONS ON KOREA AND PUERTO RICO. (II) POLITICAL-MULTILATERAL. IN MULTILATERAL FORA ALGERIAN PERFORMANCES SINCE LAST DECEMBER HAS, IF ANYTHING, BEEN MORE MODERATE THAN IT WAS BEFORE. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN RESULT IN LARGE PART OF COIN-CIDENTAL FACTORS SUCH AS CHANGING POLITICAL REALITIES OF THIRD WORLD, BUT ALSO REFLECTED TO SOME EXTENT THE REPRESENTATIONS WE HAVE MADE TO THEM ON SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. ALGERIANS HAVE NOT REJECTED OUR POSITIONS OUT OF HAND IN SPITE OF THEIR UNHAPPINESS OVER OUR POSITION ON SAHARA. (THEY MAY HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR RELATIVE MODERATION WILL HAVE A PAYOFF IN TERMS OF MORE SYMPATHY FOR THEIR SAHARAN POLICIES, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NOT BEEN TALKING IN SUCH TERMS). (III) ECONOMIC. ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH ALGERIA

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HAS CONTINUED AT A HIGH LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, WITH SOME
$2 BILLION WORTH OF CONTRACTS BEING SIGNED IN THE
PAST SIX MONTHS. BOUMEDIENNE APPARENTLY IS NOT GOING
TO LET HIS POLITICAL DISPLEASURE INTERFERE WITH HIS
ESSENTIALLY PRAGMATIC ECONOMIC DECISIONS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 027807
R 081343Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7063
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 6832

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECY ATHERTON FROM AMBS ANDERSON AND PARKER

(B) THE 1976 UNGA SESSION. WE ASSUME UNGA WILL
BE REPEAT OF COLOMBO, I.E. THAT ALGERIANS WILL NOT
BE ABLE TO GARNER A GREAT DEAL OF SUPPORT FOR THEIR
POSITION, AND THAT THERE WILL BE AGREEMENT BY MAJORITY
OF NAM MEMBERS TO BUCK QUESTION BACK TO OAU. WE
THINK THIS APPROACH SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED, BUT BELIEVE
USG SHOULD MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE. WE ASSUME USG WILL
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MADRID AGREEMENT IF QUESTION
COMES UP, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE IN FOREFRONT
OR ENGAGE IN ANY IMPASSIONED DEFENSE OF IT. TO
STATE THE OBVIOUS, WE AGREE THAT WE SHOULD REMAIN
CONSISTENT WITH OUR POSITION AT LAST YEAR'S UNGA.
TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE LITTLE
BEARING ON OUR BASIC, LONGTERM POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA, BUT WOULD CAUSE A
SERIOUS ESTRANGEMENT IN OUR CURRENTLY POSITIVE
RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO AND RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS
ABOUT OUR RELIABILITY ON THE PART OF SUCH MOROCCAN-

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US FRIENDS AS SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, TUNISIA, AND SENEGAL, TO NAME A FEW.

5. SOVIET POLICY ON THE SAHARA--AS WE SEE IT, SOVIET POLICY CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF PUBLIC NEUTRALITY ON
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WHAT MOSCOW CONSIDERS A REGIONAL DISPUTE BEST LEFT TO SOLUTION AMONG ARAB AND POSSIBLY AFRICAN NATIONS WITHOUT SUPERPOWER INVOLVEMENT. WHILE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ALGERIA MILITARILY BECAUSE OF LATTER'S USEFULNESS AS A COOPERATIVE, PROMINENT THIRD-WORLD LEADER IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, WE DO NOT THINK SOVIETS ARE INTERESTED IN PROVOKING A CONFLICT, AND WOULD EXPECT THEM TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. THIS BEING SAID, THERE IS THE POSSIBLILITY, ALLUDED TO BY ALGIERS IN EARLIER MESSAGES, THAT THE ALGERIANS, DRIVEN TO DESPAIR IN

A MILITARY CONTEST WHICH THE MOROCCANS SEEMED TO BE WINNING, MIGHT DECIDE TO CEDE TO THE SOVIETS THE USE OF NAVAL OR AIR FACILITIES IN EXCHANGE FOR ALL-OUT SUPPORT. WERE THE SOVIETS TO ACCEPT SUCH A TRADE, IT WOULD LEAD TO AN IMMEDIATE AND DANGEROUS POLARIZATION OF THE CONFLICT, AS WELL AS AFFECTING DIRECTLY OUR INTERESTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. WE JUDGE THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF THIS HAPPENING IS REMOTE, FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, WE DO NOT VISUALIZE THE MILITARY CONFLICT TAKING SUCH A PATH. THE TWO PARTIES ARE TOO EVENLY MATCHED WHEN ONE CONSIDERS NOT ONLY HARDWARE, WHERE THE ALGERIANS APPARENTLY ARE CURRENTLY SUPERIOR, BUT THE ABILITY TO USE IT. SECONDLY, THE SOVIETS EVIDENTLY ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO BECAUSE OF NAVAL VISITS IN MOROCCO'S ATLANTIC PORTS, LUCRATIVE FISHING POTENTIAL IN MOROCCAN AND SAHARAN WATERS, AND EVER-PRESENT HOPE FOR LONGTERM, ASSURED SUPPLY OF MOROCCAN PHOSPHATES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THEY WOULD WISH TO JEOPARDIZE TOTALLY THEIR RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO IN RETURN FOR, SAY, LIMITED ACCESS TO ALGERIAN PORTS WHICH WOULD BE CONVENIENT BUT NOT VITAL TO CONTINUED SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

6. IMPACT ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT FRUSTRATIONS OVER SAHARA COULD LEAD BOUMEDIENNE TO JOIN REJECTIONIST FRONT AND ACTIVELY TO OPPOSE OUR MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. THERE ARE INHERENT AND ESSENTIALLY ARAB INHIBITIONS
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AGAINST HIS DOING SO, HOWEVER, IT WOULD, FOR INSTANCE,
ALIENATE THE EGYPTIANS AND THE SAUDIS. IT WOULD
ALSO INVOLVE A DEGREE OF COOPERATION WITH IRAQ WHICH
SEEMS UNLIKELY GIVEN CURRENT ALGERIAN UNHAPPINESS
WITH THAT COUNTRY'S POSITION ON THE LEBANESE CRISIS.
THE CURRENT DISARRAY AMONG THE PALESTINIANS, AND
THE ALGERIAN COMMITMENT TO THE PLO ARE OTHER FACTORS
AGAINST SUCH A MOVE. FOR THESE, IF FOR NO OTHER
REASONS, WE SUSPECT THAT BOUMEDIENNE WILL CONTINUE
HIS ESSENTIALLY NEUTRAL (AND INEXPENSIVE) STANCE
OF SAYING HE WILL ACCEPT WHATEVER THE PALESTINIANS AND
CONFRONTATION STATES WILL ACCEPT AND WILL NOT TRY
TO SABOTAGE ANOTHER US EFFORT IN THE ME. WE ASSUME
WE COULD LIVE WITH THAT. IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT,
HOWEVER, THAT THE SAHARAN CONFLICT WERE TO ESCALATE TO A POINT
AT WHICH HE NEEDED ACCESS TO QADHAFI'S ARMS STOCKPILES AND
IF QADHAFI THEN DEMANDED AS THE PRICE OF ADMISSION HIS
ADHERENCE TO THE REJECTIONIST FRONT, BOUMEDIENNE WOULD
PROBABLY GO ALONG.

7. PARKER CAVEAT--ALTHOUGH I AGREE WITH ABOVE AND
SEE NO WORKABLE ALTERNATIVE IN SHORT RUN TO ESSENTIALLY
PRO-MOROCCAN STANCE IMPLICIT THEREIN, I AM CONCERNED
BY THE LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF OUR ARMS SUPPLY
RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO. WHILE THAT RELATIONSHIP
WAS ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED BEFORE SAHARA WENT
CRITICAL, LATTER PROBLEM HAS APPARENTLY GENERATED
SIZEABLE INCREASE IN MOROCCAN REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT
FROM THE U.S. AND OTHER SOURCES. THESE REQUESTS
WOULD OF COURSE BE MORE MODEST IF RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA
WERE NOT STRAINED OVER THE SAHARA, ANDIZGWKMY THE ALGERIANS, WHO APPA
RENTLY
RECEIVE IMPORTANT MILITARY HELP FROM THE SOVIETS
AND TO LESSER EXTENT FROM LIBYA. BE THAT AS IT MAY,
WE SEEM NOW TO BE OPERATING ON THESIS THAT WE, ALONG
WITH FRENCH AND OTHER WESTERN EUROPEANS, MUST ARM
MOROCCANS SO THEY CAN DEFEND SELVES AGAINST ALGERIANS,
ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER MOROCCAN ACTIONS WHICH
MAY PRECIPITATE HOSTILITIES--THE GREEN MARCH BEING A
CASE IN POINT. YOU WILL RECALL THE PROCESS BY WHICH
WE SUDDENLY FOUND OURSELVES THE MAJOR SUPPLIER OF ARMS

TO ISRAEL. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE ARE DISTURBING
PARALLELS WITH THAT SITUATION, AND THT WE RISK FIND-
ING OURSELVES IN A SIMILAR RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO.

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PERHAPS WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE, BUT BEFORE CONTINUING ALONG THIS PATH, WE SHOULD STOP AND RECONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY WHAT WE ARE DOING.

8. BOB SHARES MY CONCERN TO THIS EXTENT, IF THE U.S. WERE TO REPLACE FRANCE AS THE NUMBER ONE MILITARY SUPPLIER, IT COULD RESULT IN A CLIENT-STATE RELATION-SHIP DISPROPORTIONATE TO OUR INTERESTS IN MOROCCO AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH A POTENTIAL OF INVOLVING US FAR TOO DEEPLY IN SITUATIONS, OVER WHICH, AS I HAVE NOTED, WE MIGHT NOT HAVE CONTROL. IF, HOWEVER, FRANCE REMAINS THE PREDOMINANT WESTERN POWER IN, AND THE MAJOR SUPPLIER OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO MOROCCO, AND THE U.S. CONTINUES, AS HE BELIEVES TO BE THE CASE, TO RESPOND TO MOROCCAN MILITARY REQUESTS IN MEASURED TERMS WITHOUT OPENING THE FLOODGATES, HE IS NOT AS CONCERNED AS I AM.

9. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AMBASSADOR HANDYSIDE, WHO WAS ABSENT FROM NOUAKCHOTT WHILE WE WERE MEETING AND MAY NOW BE IN WASHINGTON. YOU MAY WANT TO HAVE HIS COMMENTS ON OUR THINKING. THEY SHOULD BE MOST VALUABLE.
EATON

NOTE BY OC/T: MADRID 6832 SECTION 2/2 PARA 7 AS RECEIVED.

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